

HAWTHORNE CEDAR KNOLLS UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

226 Linda Avenue, Hawthorne, NY 10566

www.hcks.org

LETTER TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

August 26, 2026

Subject: Important Water Safety Information

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As we begin the 2026–2027 school year, Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Union Free School District is providing this important information regarding water safety in accordance with New York State Education Law § 926, which became effective July 1, 2026.

The law requires school districts to provide parents and guardians with information regarding drowning prevention, water safety, and safe and healthy swimming.

We encourage all families to review the following important safety reminders with their children:

- **Always supervise children around water.** Young children should be actively and continuously supervised by an adult whenever they are near or in water.
- **Teach children how to swim.** Swimming lessons and water-safety instruction can help children develop important skills and confidence in the water.
- **Swim in designated areas.** Whenever possible, use swimming areas supervised by a qualified lifeguard and follow all posted safety rules.
- **Use life jackets when appropriate.** Children and adults should wear properly fitted, U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets when boating or participating in activities where there is a risk of falling into the water.
- **Never swim alone.** Children and adults should use the buddy system and avoid swimming in areas that are not designated for swimming.
- **Know the signs of drowning.** Drowning can happen quickly and may not involve loud or obvious signs of distress. Close supervision is critical.
- **Practice healthy swimming habits.** Follow pool and beach rules, shower before swimming when required, take regular bathroom breaks, and avoid swimming when experiencing diarrhea or other illnesses that could contaminate the water.
- **Be aware of changing conditions.** Weather, currents, water temperature, depth, and other conditions can create unexpected hazards.

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The New York State Department of Health has developed a resource titled **“Safe Swimming Tips for Everyone”** which provides additional information about drowning prevention, water safety, and safe and healthy swimming.

The District will also make water safety information available in a visible location on the Hawthorne Cedar Knolls UFSD website.

If you would like this information translated into one of the 12 most commonly spoken non-English languages in New York State, please contact the District, and we will provide the information upon request.

Thank you for your partnership in helping to keep our students and families safe around water.

Sincerely,

Raymond Raefski

Ray Raefski
Superintendent of Schools
Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Union Free School District

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